

*C*  
*too brief, no real discussion of the  
significance of the passage & no analysis &  
evaluation of the commentaries*

Joseph B. Bustillos  
BOTS: Patriarchs  
10/28/81

READING: GENESIS 32:22-32  
The Wrestling at Peniel

One of the basic interpretative problems with this section of scripture is determining its relationship to the story of Jacob's encounter with his brother, Esau. It was the consensus of the commentaries that I read, however, that this story may serve as a type of forewarning to Jacob, a test before actually re-entering the Promised Land. Speiser entitles this section, "Encounters."

Another difficulty is this section's "undesirable" illustration of God physically combatting with a mere mortal and then having the mortal force his will upon the retreating God. A very confusing picture. The whole feel of the encounter is reminiscent of Abraham's covenant encounter in chapter 15. It's not a mere vision (i.e., in his head) but it takes place in the plane of the physical/material universe. By the choppy, incomplete narrative we can see that words fail to depict the episode completely.

The verses (beginning actually with verse one) take us from Laban's farewell to Jacob's preparatory steps before meeting his brother then finally to Jacob's encounter with YHWH.

Verse two introduces us to the aspect that some sort of divine activity is taking place (this is never completely elaborated upon in the text). Verse four on until verse



twenty-two depict Jacob's attempts to appease his brother (which climaxes in his encounter with YHWH and not Esau). Verses twenty-three and twenty-four, Jacob finally sends off his family. And then, verses twenty-five through thirty-three, we have Jacob's unusual encounter with God. Speiser writes:

The chapter as a whole is given over to encounters of one kind or another: actual and anticipated, sublime and trifling. Ironically enough, it is the incalculable that turns out to be real, while the carefully calculated never comes off. (pp.255-256).

Robert Davidson in the Cambridge Bible Commentary summarizes this section as follows:

There is no more strange or perplexing narrative than this in the whole of the Old Testament. The boldness of the language and the symbolism in the story is startling. It is not recounted as a dream or vision, but as an incident which happened one night. Jacob wrestled with an unidentified "man" who turned out to be God, wrestled and lived to tell the tale. Gathered into the story are so many curious elements that we can only assume that here is a story which has taken many centuries to reach its present form, and which has assimilated material, some of it very primitive, which goes back long before the time of Jacob. (p.184).

Depending on one's willingness to accept the hypothesis that the patriarchal narratives include "legend" will dictate the openness with which one entertains various explanations given for some of the more difficult aspects of this story. Regarding the nature of the unidentified man that wrestles with Jacob at the ford of Jabbok the Cambridge Bible Commentary says:

This may have its roots in stories, widespread



in many cultures, of the river spirit who has to be placated or defeated before he will allow the traveller to cross. The unidentified man may originally have been the river spirit of the Jabbok.

And regarding his comment about the day Breaking:

the belief that spirits and ghosts who haunt the night are doomed to disappear before day-break. "Let me go," says the man, "for the day is breaking" verse 26). (both p.185).

The ICC notes regarding the explanation of Jacob's new name, "Striver with God":

This can hardly refer merely to the contests with Laban and Esau; it points rather to the existence of a fuller body of legend, in which Jacob figured as the hero of many combats, culminating in this successful struggle with deity. (pp.409-10).

*I would like to see a more diligent attempt to reflect the conservative commentaries. Perhaps they do mention some less extreme solutions to some of these problems.*

A professor once warned us that as undergraduate students we should not expect nor be expected to resolve the "great questions of the faith." This is simply because by definition these controversies do not easily bend into any given resolution. In this passage we have such a problem. We are left with either a "modernized", Hebraized legend of a water spirit or an embarrassingly anthropomorphic YHWH. It must be confessed that both of the views cited are extreme views, but even in the "extremeness" the two essential points of the narrative come through: (1) God has kept His end of the deal up and has remained close to Jacob (ch.28), and (2) Jacob's priority/contention is with God and not Esau (or any other obstacle for that matter).

COMMENTARIES CONSULTED:

Davidson, Robert. "Genesis." Cambridge Bible Commentary.

Kline, Meredith G. "Genesis." The New Bible Commenatary: Re-  
vised.

Lange. "Genésis." Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures.

Skinner. "Genesis." ICC.

Speiser, E.A. "Genesis." The Anchor Bible.



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A professor once warned us that as undergraduate students we should not expect nor be expected to resolve the "great questions of the faith." This is simply because by definition these controversies do not easily bend into any given resolution. In this passage we have such a problem. We are left with either a "modernized", Hebraized legend of a water spirit or an embarrassingly anthropomorphic YHWH. It must be confessed that both of the views cited are extreme views, but even in the "extremeness" the two essential points of the narrative come through: (1) God has kept His end of the deal up and has remained close to Jacob (ch.28), and (2) Jacob's priority/contention is with God and not Esau (or any other obstacle for that matter).



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Skinner. "Genesis." ICC.

Speiser, E.A. "Genesis." The Anchor Bible.

50/50 think in terms of more interaction  
with the material in your remaining  
reports

~~Bob~~ BUSTIN'S

BOTS 300-PATRIARCHS

10/8/81

### REQUIRED READING:

K. KITCHEN THE BIBLE IN ITS WORLD

THE MOST HELPFUL CONTRIBUTION KITCHEN SEEMS TO MAKE IN HIS HISTORICAL STUDY IS THE PERSPECTIVE THAT BEFORE THE PATRIARCHAL NARRATIVES, THERE IS 18000 YEARS OF HISTORY. THE TYPICAL LIMITED VIEW OF CIVILIZATION (FROM THE CHRISTIAN STANDPOINT) FINDS A HANDFUL OF SOCIETIES SCATTERED HERE & THERE UP UNTIL THE TIME OF ABRAHAM AND THEN POW!, WE HAVE HISTORY. BUT, OBVIOUSLY THIS IS NOT THE CASE.

AS A CONSEQUENCE OF MY OWN LACK IN THE AREA OF ANCIENT HISTORY IT WOULD RATHER ASSUME ON MY PART TO CRITICIZE KITCHEN'S IDEAS. IT CAN BE SAID HOWEVER THAT BECAUSE OF KITCHEN'S INSIGHTS THE POINT ABOUT ABRAHAM BEING A HISTORICAL CHARACTER IN A HISTORICAL SETTING IS WELL MADE.



THE BOSTONS

BOTS 300 - PATRIARCHS

10/8/81

REQUIRED READING #1:

E. H. MERRILL "FIXED DATES IN PATRIARCHAL CHRONOLOGY"

THE MOST THAT I GOT OUT OF THIS ARTICLE WAS A  
DESIRE TO LOOK INTO EDWIN THIEL'S "THE MYSTERIOUS NUMBERS  
OF THE HEBREW KINGS."

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF POINTING OUT ONE OR TWO PROBLEMS  
IN ORCHESTRATING A PATRIARCHAL CHRONOLOGY (DIANA'S AGE  
AT SHECHEM FOR EXAMPLE) THE ARTICLE IS A BASIC SURVEY  
OF THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD.



JOE BUSTLOS

BOYS 300 - PATRIARCHS

10/8/81

REQUIRED READING #1!

DR. WISEMAN, "ABRAHAM IN HISTORY & TRADITION," PARTS I & II

PART ONE OF WISEMAN'S ARTICLE DOESN'T SEEM TO GET OFF THE GROUND. THE POINT THAT ABRAHAM WAS MORE THAN A WERE "STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND" DOESN'T SEEM TO EVER SETTLE. I SUPPOSE THIS IS BECAUSE WISEMAN'S INTERPRETATION OF ABRAHAM'S "ALTARS & TENTS" RUNS RIGHT IN THE FACE OF THE TYPICAL EVANGELICAL UNDERSTANDING.

IT IS INTERESTING THEN THAT IN REVIEWING PART TWO OF HIS ARTICLE I FOUND MYSELF MORE IN AGREEMENT WITH HIS VIEW. I IMAGINE THAT BE EXPLAINED BY THE FACT THAT PART ONE PRIMARILY DISMANTLED A FEW O.T. VIEWS WHILE PART TWO INTRODUCED THE 'SOLUTIONS.'

PARTICULARLY INTERESTING TO ME WAS THE VIEW THAT ABRAHAM UNDERSTOOD HIS POSITION AS GOD'S "GOVERNOR" IN THE PROMISED LAND. HIS FORESHADOW OF DAVID'S LATER UNDERSTANDING OF RULERSHIP IN THE PROMISED LAND IS QUITE INTERESTING.



Job Busting

Bot's 300- Patriarchs

10/8/81

REQUIRED READING # 1:

W. KAISER TOWARD A O.T. THEOLOGY.

TO WD KAISER COMES OFF AS A BRIEF HISTORICAL  
SURVEY WITH THREE POINTS TO BE MADE, I HAD PREVIOUSLY  
READ HIS MATERIAL OF THE MOSAIC PERIOD AND FOUND IT  
DISCUSTINGLY SHORT (SOMETHING LIKE MY REVIEWS). I  
FIND THE SAME IS TRUE WITH HIS TREATMENT OF THE  
PATRIARCHS. SKIPPING THROUGH SEVERAL THOUSAND YEARS OF HISTORY  
AT THIS PACE CAN GIVE ONE A HEADACHE.



JOB BUSTILLOS  
BOTS 300-PATRIARCHS  
10/8/81

REQUIRED READING #1

SELMAN "THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS OF THE  
PATRIARCHS"

ONE THING THAT APPREHENDED REGARDING THIS ARTICLE WAS  
THAT SELMAN DOES NOT SEEM TO WANT BRING THE  
GENESIS NARRATIVE INTO AGREEMENT WITH ARCHEOLOGY BUT RATHER  
WANTS TO RECONCILE THE ACCOUNT WITH AN UNDERSTANDING  
OF VARIOUS ARCHEOLOGICAL FINDS.

AS WITH KITCHEN, BECAUSE THE MATERIAL IS NEW, A  
CRITICAL ANALYSIS WOULD BE A LITTLE BEYOND MY EXPERIENCE.  
IT DOES HOWEVER POINT OUT THAT IN FUTURE READINGS ILL  
HAVE TO BE MORE AWARE THAT MOST OF THESE ISSUES ARE  
AS OF YET UNSETTLED.



~ 1966

Beginning w/ A. Alt's essay on the "God of the Fathers" ①  
(critics) set about to investigate the possibility of  
many scholars ~~have set about to see in the text of the~~

~~Patriarchal narrative~~ ② remnants of a pre-Yahwist religion.  
being found in the Patriarchal narrative. ②

More recently John Van Seters, from the Univ. of North

Carolina, ~~has~~ ~~addressed~~ ~~this~~ ~~attempted~~ to ~~analyze~~ analyze

the works of, primarily, Alt & F. M. Cross in this area. ③ ④

Using his work as a guide we will ~~try~~ attempt to present the

basic theory & hopefully some ~~new~~ viewpoints that will help  
the evangelical understand this area of study.

For the moment we will give Van Seters his <sup>underlying</sup> ~~view~~ view

regarding the validity of the Documentary Hypothesis.

~~we~~ we will ~~address~~ <sup>the Documentary Hypothesis</sup> later in this paper. This is important



proof

the importance of this is <sup>which is</sup> ~~as never seen~~ seen in his first print, that the data that <sup>possess</sup> ~~possess~~ we ~~have~~ <sup>have</sup> in Gen pertaining to the religion of patriarchs

cannot be assumed to ~~be~~ be either primary or dated early (pre-settlement period). He seems to base this observation on the fact that much of the religious language

of the patriarchal stories is common to the language of

2nd Isaiah & is not found in ~~the~~ pre-exilic literature.

archiving  
for the part  
of 2 Is.?

The foundation of this study is <sup>how one understands</sup> ~~the problem~~ <sup>what one understands</sup>

~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> 'el ~~epithets~~ <sup>epithets</sup> (~~the same study related references to~~

~~in the patriarchal narrative~~ <sup>in the patriarchal narrative</sup> ~~to mean~~ <sup>to mean</sup> ~~we will look at~~ <sup>we will look at</sup>

such epithets: 'el 'elyon (14:12)

1) 'el 'elohé yis'ra'el (33:20)

2) kâ'el (46:1)

3) 'el bêt'el (35:7; 31:13)



- 3) 'ēl 'ōlām (21:33)
- 4) 'ēl rō'ā (16:13)
- 5) 'ēl šadday (17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25)
- 6) 'ēl 'elyōn (14:18ff)

It was Alt's point of view that these names represented "local  
 deities worshipped by the indigenous population & only became  
 amalgamated w/ the 'God of the Fathers' after the nomadic  
 Fathers began to settle in the land. <sup>however</sup> ⑥ Cross & ~~those~~ that  
 followed, <sup>however</sup> felt that the epithets refer to the cosmic Canaanite  
 deity, El, Father of the gods & the god of the patriarchs. ⑦

Seemingly in support of the last part of this last opinion ~~that~~

Walter Eichrodt in his TOT writes:

" All the divine names preserved in Gen. include the  
~~co-~~ ~~final~~ component 'ēl, w/ the sole exception of the  
 pāhād yishūg, Gen 31:42 - a fact <sup>which is</sup> ~~that~~ hardly  
 to be explained as a product of tendentious emendation,



since ~~no~~ stress is laid on the opposition to the Canaanite Baal~~et~~, in addition, the personal names of the patriarchs, the very Foundation stone of the saga, indicate that their owners were El worshippers. Even Isaac, Jacob, & Joseph can be authentically cited as theophorous personal names w/ the component El, though this was dropped at a later period. "⑧

(Eichrodt would <sup>also</sup> hold ~~also~~ to an early date for the 'ēl epithets).

~~§~~  
Van Setters responds by <sup>writing</sup> ~~saying~~ that "the term 'ēl by itself

is ambiguous because it can be~~be~~ the name of the god

El or it can be the generic appellation for deity equivalent to 'ēlōhīm. "⑨ AS w/ other such terms, 'ēl <sup>therefore</sup> is <sup>3</sup> defined by

its context. This means that ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> majority of the times <sup>by exegesis</sup> that ~~el~~ is ~~used~~ <sup>no</sup> ~~there~~ This is generally assumed to

mean that ~~unless~~ otherwise noted in the context, 'ēl is to be understood simply as another word for God.



<sup>possible</sup> to this rule  
The <sup>exceptions</sup> are the <sup>six</sup> 'el epithets <sup>which</sup> ~~that~~ we are  
now going to address.

1) 'el zîlôhê yis'râ'el, as it appears in Gen 33:20, ~~has~~  
~~been~~ has been argued to be an example ~~of~~ where  
'el ~~must~~ be understood as a proper name:

"Jacob ~~was~~ arrived safe in the city of Shechem, which is in  
the land of Canaan - having come thence from Paddan-aram.  
He encamped w/ sight of the city; the plot of ground where  
he pitched his tent he then bought from the sons of Hamor, the  
father of Shechem, for a hundred kesitahs. He erected there  
an altar & called it El-elohe-Israel. (Gen 33:18-20) <sup>(16)</sup>

It is interesting to me that ~~neither~~ the Anchor Bible nor

the Authorized Version translate the phrase El-elohe-Israel.

In the case of the Authorized Version I found it ~~easy~~ <sup>easy</sup> to

overlook <sup>to</sup> miss the tension of this phrase. The tension is



obviously is <sup>whether</sup> ~~the~~ 'el refers to the Canaanite God El  
is just "god"?  
Van Seters presents three possible solutions.

a. The first possible solution was first proposed by

Cross<sup>(11)</sup>, which is that the word "Israel" refers to the

patriarch Israel. The emphasis thereby resting <sup>on</sup> ~~on~~ the

~~the~~ patriarch & the term <sup>'el</sup> is then left slightly ~~ambiguous~~.

~~used in this fashion in the phrase~~ Van Seters finds difficulty

w/ this reading because the more common <sup>usage</sup> ~~word~~ for the

epithet 'elôhî yis'râ'êl is "god <sup>+</sup> of the people Israel" & that

a "later Pentateuchal writer"<sup>(12)</sup> is responsible for making the

phrase mean "god of the patriarch Israel." An objection

to Van Seters' point is that at this point in the narrative



the earlier reading (that doesn't involve a "Canaanite deity" rendering) ~~it~~ would be to see Jacob refer to ~~him~~ himself rather than a nation that does ~~not~~ yet exist. (Again, if we are dealing w/ a later tradition leaving its impression on the narrative then Van Setters' point has some credibility).

b. The second possible solution is that this epithet is an effort on the part of the patriarchal writer to equate

Yahweh, the god of Israel, w/ El, the god of Shechem;

For what reason - it seems to escape both <sup>myself</sup> me & Van Setters

c. The third solution involves 2nd Isaiah's usage of the term 'ēl.

"You are my witness," oracle of Yahweh, "that I am 'ēl"  
43:12;

"Turn to me & be saved, all the ends of the earth,



For I am 'ēl & there is no one else. " 45:22;

"Remember the former things from ancient times, for I am 'ēl & there is no ~~one~~ else, I am 'ēlōhīm & there is none like me. " 46:9 <sup>(3)</sup>

He then asserts that the writer must be saying more ~~that~~

than that Yhwh is deity but that "'ēl must have the special

sense of being the supreme deity & of being recognized as such

by other peoples. " <sup>(14)</sup> Therefore the phrase could read "God is

the god of Israel" & be seen as echoing the implications

of 2<sup>nd</sup> Isaiah. Frankly, I am far more at home w/

the first solution simply ~~because~~ because it seems to be

a more accurate reflection of the context & events that

surround the passage (i.e. ~~Yhwh's name being changed~~

to ~~Israel~~ etc.). Also, <sup>acknowledging</sup> ~~it should be pointed out that~~ <sup>isn't</sup> ~~strong~~



~~James Barr's work on <sup>the superiority of using a contextual</sup> hermeneutic over a comparative <sup>hermeneutic</sup> (15) / not to mention that~~

~~the relationship between the patriarchal writer's usage of <sup>the</sup> word 'el & 2nd Isaiah's usage of the word <sup>can</sup> ~~has~~ not~~  
~~has not been substantiated~~  
~~be ~~possibly~~ proven to be~~

James Barr's work on the superiority of using a contextual  
hermeneutic over a comparative hermeneutic (15) / not to mention  
that the relationship between the patriarchal writer & his usage  
of the word 'el has not been substantiated <sup>to</sup> 2nd Isaiah & his  
usage of the word). And the first solution more tenable  
I will stick to the first solution

2) 'el bet'el -

"Thus Jacob arrived in Luz -- that is, Bethel -- in the land  
of Canaan, together w/ all the people who were w/ him. There  
he built an altar and named it El-bethel, for it was there  
that God had revealed himself to him when he was  
fleeing from his brother." Gen 35: 6-7



Van Seton questions the accuracy of the Masoretic text

by pointing out that 'el is not found in the Greek, the

Syriac or the Vulgate. <sup>(16)</sup> This may or may not be true but

the real point is that the way the present text reads does

not necessarily point to a Canaanite deity, ~~syncretism~~

~~Hebrew text~~ It is explained later in the verse

that 'el refers to the God that revealed himself to Jacob

in the previous theophany (cf. 28: ~~10~~ 10ff) which is ~~now~~

~~the~~ Yahweh. specifically referred in the text of that theophany  
as Yahweh. 6

A more difficult passage related to the theophany

in Bethel is found in 31:13

" 12-13





(God)

# He <sup>↓</sup>said "Note well that all the he-goats in the flock, as they mate, are streaked, speckled, and mottled - for I too have noted all the things that Laban has been doing to you, I the God (who appeared to you ~~this~~) Bethel, where you anointed a stone & made a vow to me. Up, then, ~~to~~ leave this land & return to the land of your birth." 31:12-13

The Hebrew text reads "I am the god (of) Bethel."

(hā'el bē't 'ēl) where you anointed a pillar..." Van Seters's

reaction is, "Here again the text is probably defective." (17)

He then points out three things (A) because of the article the

epithet cannot be constructed as "god of Bethel" (B) by

context, Bethel is a place-name & not the name of this

deity, i.e. "the god, Bethel" (C) therefore he accepts <sup>van Seters</sup> ~~the view~~

of the longer Greek text: hā'el hannir'eh 'ēleykē ~~that~~  
bē' bē't 'ēl, primarily because it satisfies all the



grammatical problems.

(ignorant of Heb. language / usage of article  
- id w/ God of the - greek text id's effected  
term) w/ YHWH.

At this point I am somewhat at a loss due to my  
ignorance of proper Hebrew grammar, but just as a  
principle of language in general I am aware of the  
demonstrative / specifying nature of <sup>the article</sup> ~~most~~ articles. (18)

~~And~~ therefore, the use of the article in the above cited verse  
can be understood as (to Jacob <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ readership)  
<sup>being</sup> used to point out, that ~~the~~ <sup>the author is</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>not</sup> referring to ~~et~~

just "a god" or "any god" of Bethel but to "the (one)

god" that Jacob knew (because <sup>7</sup> ~~was~~ aware of) while at

Bethel. The greek additions would, therefore, <sup>attempt at</sup> ~~essentially~~ be under-  
stood as the later greek compiler <sup>attempt at</sup> explaining what we just



explained using the article & the verses' context.

The next two epithets Van Seters deals w/ in short order. They are: ~~El~~ 'ēl 'ōlām (Gen. 21:33) & 'ēl rō'î (Gen. 16:13-14).

③ ~~the~~ 'ēl 'ōlām: "As for Abraham, he planted a tamarisk @ Beer-sheva, & there he invoked the name of Yhwh, the Eternal God. (Gen. 21:33)

④ ~~the~~ 'ēl-rō'î "And Yhwh who had spoken to her she called by the name 'You are El-rō'î', by which she meant, 'Did I not go on seeing here after he had seen me.' (Gen. 16:33)

Regarding 'ēl 'ōlām Cross writes " 'ōlām is very ancient & West Semitic & may be especially appropriate

for the ~~god~~ god, El. ② That this ~~El~~ epithet appears in such close proximity <sup>to</sup> the <sup>name</sup> word Yhwh should



on the part of  
~~important~~ some contain ~~by~~ some ~~of the~~ ~~scholar~~ when

attributing  $^2\text{el } \text{Al}^{3+}$  to the carbonate  $\text{el}$ . Van Seter's

conclusion is "It has to remain the religion of Yahuwah"

acquired this & other epithets is a matter of speculation about

which the text of Genesis can tell us nothing. (21)

Regarding 'el ro' Van Solera throws it out as a

true epithet because it cannot stand as a ~~verb~~

pre-existing concrete diety apart from the narrative.<sup>22</sup>

The word only is used to make a connection between

the story & the place-name, Laharol.

The last two ~~epithets~~ <sup>that he addresses</sup> epithets are a bit more difficult

(and using draft w/ at the end of his article).



⑤ 'el šadday -

The God of your fathers who aids you,  
Šadday who grants you his blessings -  
Blessings of heaven above  
Of the deep that couches below,  
Blessings of breast & womb." Gen 49:25

It is here in Van Seter's analysis of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> data  
that his basic ~~methodology~~ methodology <sup>is</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>fully</sup> ~~truly~~ <sup>truly</sup> comes  
~~out~~ out.

A synopsis of his position (in regards to this  
example) is that the poem is a whole <sup>(~~whole~~)</sup> <sup>(a)</sup> reflects ~~(~~a~~)~~ a  
period after the settlement & rise of the monarchy (at  
the earliest) <sup>↑</sup> (b) that the original is not related to the

Patriarchal narrative at all, but is a series of emblematic

typifications <sup>verses</sup> ~~used~~ 25-26 are  
<sup>↑</sup> (used to make the poem fit better into the

sense of a patriarchal blessing; usually Dt. 33 as a standard)



He then gives some grammatical & comparative evidence to substantiate his claim.

One of the problems ~~that I have~~ w/ Van Seter's methodology is the philosophy ~~that~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>is</sup> eliminating the problem text or by placing it out of the scope of the particular study being conducted ~~that~~ <sup>then</sup> all is well; When in actuality this procedure may simply make it plain that what ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> dealing w/ is ~~a~~ <sup>the</sup> symptom of a larger problem. In this particular case ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> more essential problem may be ~~investigating~~ <sup>whether</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> cultural heritage ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> a given word or epithet (e.g. El Sadday, etc.) ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> substantiates the dependency of Israel's religion (Yahwism) ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> on an older Canaanite religion. <sup>(23)</sup> ~~may be the~~ <sup>work</sup>

Van Seter's basic philosophy coupled w/ his use of this



documentary hypothesis (which has come under increased attack in recent years),<sup>24</sup> should lead one to realize that his analysis ~~will~~ may end up less than conclusive.

~~I will address this~~

(c) 'El 'Elyōn

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread & wine; he was priest of El-Elyōn. He blessed him, saying  
'Blessed be Abram by El-Elyōn,  
Creator of heaven & earth.  
And prais'd be El-Elyōn,  
who has delivered your foes to you.'  
And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Then the king of Salem said to Abram, 'Give me the persons, if you may keep the property.' But Abram replied to the king of Salem, 'I have sworn to Yhweh, God most High, Creator of Heaven & earth, that not so much as a thread or a sandal strap would I take of anything that belongs to you, lest you say, "I made Abram rich."'

Gen. 14: 18-23



Two factors come into play (Van Seter's mentions the first) when considering <sup>ing</sup> this passage. The first is the date of the text. Van Seter's notes:

...if one accepts the opinion of many literary critics that the text is one of the latest additions to the Pentateuch then it is remarkable how such language is quite appropriate to a late period. It has long been observed that the title used of Melchizedek, as a priest of 'el 'elyon is not found elsewhere in the OT, but corresponds to the title used of the high <sup>10</sup> ~~24~~ <sup>26</sup> priesthood during the time of the Hasmoneans.

Van Seter favors a later, Priestly, date for the material.

The second factor is the relationship between Melchizedek's

<sup>in</sup> use of "El-Elyon" & Abraham's usage of "Yhweh, God

most high." Generally it is assumed that Melchizedek calls

upon the name of his (concrete) god, as was the custom,

† Abraham later in the narrative identifies his Yhweh w/ this



27 ~~27~~ evangelicals however,  
deity. most, could argue, that Abraham (as the

patriarchal writer) is simply using melchizedek's

language to identify his own god. At this point, <sup>the tension</sup> the

text seems to call for the recognition of two gods.

~~13~~ The first is ~~matched~~ melchizedek's El-Elyon & the second

is Abraham's "Yehweh, God most high". The tension refuses

to be lessened by the ~~subject~~ subjugation of El-Elyon to

Yehweh (& thereby ignoring extra-Biblical evidence) or

Yehweh to El-Elyon (~~thus~~ disregarding the context of the verse,

& also the plain meaning of much of the O.T.). A middle

way is sought, which the scriptures provide. <sup>E. A. Spenser</sup> ~~Derek Kidner~~

writes:



God most ~~High~~ High ('ēl 'ēlyôn), whatever the title meant to Melchizedek's predecessors & successors, meant to him the true God, self-revealed in nature, as his <sup>next</sup> words show. In any case Abram's title & his conjunction with the name Yehoweh of Melchizedek's

As a covenant priest, Melchizedek would invoke his deity at deities by name & .... Abraham, on the other hand, would just as naturally turn to Yehoweh, especially in an ~~the~~ oath. ~~28~~ 28

then ends his survey of  
the Seter ~~1~~ ~~2~~ ~~3~~ ~~4~~ ~~5~~ ~~6~~ ~~7~~ ~~8~~ ~~9~~ ~~10~~ ~~11~~ ~~12~~ ~~13~~ ~~14~~ ~~15~~ ~~16~~ ~~17~~ ~~18~~ ~~19~~ ~~20~~ ~~21~~ ~~22~~ ~~23~~ ~~24~~ ~~25~~ ~~26~~ ~~27~~ ~~28~~ ~~29~~ ~~30~~ ~~31~~ ~~32~~ ~~33~~ ~~34~~ ~~35~~ ~~36~~ ~~37~~ ~~38~~ ~~39~~ ~~40~~ ~~41~~ ~~42~~ ~~43~~ ~~44~~ ~~45~~ ~~46~~ ~~47~~ ~~48~~ ~~49~~ ~~50~~ ~~51~~ ~~52~~ ~~53~~ ~~54~~ ~~55~~ ~~56~~ ~~57~~ ~~58~~ ~~59~~ ~~60~~ ~~61~~ ~~62~~ ~~63~~ ~~64~~ ~~65~~ ~~66~~ ~~67~~ ~~68~~ ~~69~~ ~~70~~ ~~71~~ ~~72~~ ~~73~~ ~~74~~ ~~75~~ ~~76~~ ~~77~~ ~~78~~ ~~79~~ ~~80~~ ~~81~~ ~~82~~ ~~83~~ ~~84~~ ~~85~~ ~~86~~ ~~87~~ ~~88~~ ~~89~~ ~~90~~ ~~91~~ ~~92~~ ~~93~~ ~~94~~ ~~95~~ ~~96~~ ~~97~~ ~~98~~ ~~99~~ ~~100~~ ~~101~~ ~~102~~ ~~103~~ ~~104~~ ~~105~~ ~~106~~ ~~107~~ ~~108~~ ~~109~~ ~~110~~ ~~111~~ ~~112~~ ~~113~~ ~~114~~ ~~115~~ ~~116~~ ~~117~~ ~~118~~ ~~119~~ ~~120~~ ~~121~~ ~~122~~ ~~123~~ ~~124~~ ~~125~~ ~~126~~ ~~127~~ ~~128~~ ~~129~~ ~~130~~ ~~131~~ ~~132~~ ~~133~~ ~~134~~ ~~135~~ ~~136~~ ~~137~~ 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represent an increasing effort to identify which of  
the one universal deity reflected in the use of the  
term 'el.' ~~29~~ 29

Along the basic tenets of Van Seters' anchoring I

would have to agree.

I would like to close w/ one observation. (18)

A lot has been written about what one can & cannot assume from  
The burden of proof rests w/ Alt & others to prove that  
that there is a

relationship between the patriarchal narrative & the use of  
the 'el epithets & the Canaanite religions. <sup>There is not enough</sup> ~~It cannot be~~

evidence to  
assume that because some of these references appear in the  
patriarchal narrative that the religion of Israel must  
have evolved from or assimilated a Canaanite 'el  
religion.

(29) Because of mounting evidence against it & other ~~things~~



- ① History -
- ② Limits -
- ③ objections -
- ④ conclusions -

## APPENDIX B: The Documentary Hypothesis

The core of much today's scholarship in the study of the Pentateuch is the Documentary Hypothesis.

'The all important point ... is that the Pentateuch was in reality a composite work, the product of many hands & periods. This is the fundamental fact behind all recent progress in Biblical study, as it has opened the way to a solution ~~of~~ many difficulties that ~~would have otherwise~~ otherwise remain unresolved.

E.A. Speiser Genesis p. ~~xxx~~

These Speiser <sup>remarks</sup> ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> the



Adv. St: Patriarch  
Ed Curtis, prof.  
Curtis

The Religion of the Patriarchs:  
a survey of the <sup>2</sup>el epistola Paul - Ben 12-50

December 16, 1981



van Schober's ANALYSIS OF ALT'S / cross' investigation  
into the religion of the Patriarchal  
I. 'el no mother Patriarchal Darty

- Date

- 'el epithets & 2nd Israh (eg.)

- the epithets ① 'el 'elohē yir'ra'el

② hā'el

③ 'el bāt'el

④ 'el 'olām

⑤ 'el rō'i

⑥ 'el 'adday

⑦ 'el 'elyōn

- graves / pillars / altars

- Summary: record "late"  
tradition passages → "P"

Documentary Hypothesis

- history

- criterion

- questions

- Date

→ religion of Israel / Patriarchal

Practical / Absolute  
monothelism

History

literary analysis.



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- ③ F. M. Cross, Canaanite Myth & Hebrew Epic (Cambridge, Mass, 1973) 1-75

④ John Van Seters, "The Religion of the Patriarchs in ~~Genesis~~ Genesis." Biblica 61 (1980) pp. 220-233

5. Van Seters, p. 221

6. ~~Van Seters~~, p. 221-2

7. ~~ibid~~ p. 222

8. Eichrodt, 180 ← Whole title

9. Van Seters, 222

10. ~~Spencer~~. Gen. It should be <sup>printed at</sup> ~~noted~~ that unless otherwise ~~note~~ noted I will be using the Anchor Bible.

11. Cross, p. 49

12. Van Seters p. 222

13. Van Seters' translation.

14. Van Seters, p. 223

15. ~~class~~ <sup>personal</sup> ~~notes~~ <sup>notes</sup> - Ad St - Matthew. Dr. Robert Horvath, professor  
Baylor Univ 12/10/81

16. Van Seters p. 224

17. ~~ibid~~

18. Dana & Mantey. A Manual Grammar of the Greek N.T.  
The Macmillan Co: Toronto, Ontario, 1927) p. 137



19. RSV reads: "Have I really seen God & remained alive  
after seeing him?"

20. Cross, p. 17ff

21. Van Seters, p. 225

22. *ibid.*

23. See Appendix A, ~~ANP~~.

24. "By One Hand?" Time 118 (12/17/81) p. 97 & Derek  
Kidner Tyndale O.T. Commentaries: Genesis (Downers Grove,  
Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1967) p. 16ff.

<sup>25</sup>  
25. ~~I will address these objections in more depth at the conclusion~~  
of this paper. See appendix B for notes on Documentary Hypothesis

26. ~~25~~ Van Seters pp 228-229

27. ~~26~~ Eichrodt, p. 181

28. ~~27~~ Spenser p. 104

29. ~~28~~ Van Seters. pp 230.

30. ~~see~~ ~~Derek~~ pp 16ff



## THE RELIGION OF THE ANCESTORS

A religion of the land of Palestine & Yahwism of  
houses

concern w/ 'el epithets & the closely related  
references to sacred trees, sacred stones & stars

Date → neither late nor early - but "the religion of  
these stories must be ~~shown to~~ "fit" the religion  
of this late period - not out of place in the exile period.

some say "el" epithets early (exile post ex "archaizing")  
→ special case / [Qua] → relation of eg. 2 kinds w/ 'el of Can.  
traditions? & gen. term for God [221]

All isolates 'el from any larger literary work in  
which they occur - Sig.

'el epithets

- 'el elyôn - H, 18ff: Melchizedek story most high<sup>st</sup>
- 'el rôl - 16, 13: Hagai's exclamation - seeing
- 'el ôlam 21:33: Abraham plants a grove - everlasting
- 'el 'êlôhê yisrâ'el 33:20: Jacob's Shalem (unknown in KJV)
- 'el bêt 'el (35:17; 31:13) - el bêt 'el - Jacob's altar / returning to the  
land - God's theophany to Jacob - KJV - in the God of Bethel



El Šadday 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25)  
promise/blessing prayers

① "Alt has suggested that these names referred to local ~~human~~ <sup>numina</sup> worshipped by the indigenous pop. & only became amalgamated w/ the God of Patriarchal after the nomadic pre-fathers began to settle in the land.

→ cross el = <sup>cosmic</sup> ~~cosmic~~ deity - Father of the gods - patri's God too - as reflect in Ugaritic texts. consensus primitive phase of Israelite religion.

El ambiguous ... "in a few rare cases it may refer to the name of a deity El as distinct from, or not clear identified w/ Yahweh." p. 222

① El 'ēlōhē yisrā'el (33:20) cross. "El, god of Israel" =  
high god El & the god of the father → ēlōhē yisrā'el  
god of the patriarchal community throughout OT. yet this combination of episodes belongs to the later Pentateuchal writer / Ques → ēlōhē yisrā'el could it be a later addition to the epithet 'el? /  
p. 222 el is god of Israel / assoc. w/ YHWH & Yahweh

El as other Patriarchal Deity



② → older approach  $\text{el}$  (mehen) = Yahweh (god of Israel)  
 ∴ trad. didn't come from Patri. age but after  
 settlement (canaan influence) ∴  $\text{El}$ , the god of Israel  
 parallel pos 1/2 setting up others (pillars) Ex 17:5 Moses  
 YHWH Nissi & Jdg 6:24 Gideon YHWH ~~Yahweh~~ Jālôm rather  
 than 18 others w/ deity make promise into sentences eg  
 "Yahweh is my banner" & "Yahweh is peace" ∴ →  
 "El is the god of Israel"

③ 2nd ISRAELI assertion:

You were my witnesses, oracle of YHWH, "that I am  
 $\text{El}$ ", 43:12

Turn to me & be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I  
 am  $\text{El}$  & there is no one else" 45:22

Remember the former things from ancient times,

For I am  $\text{El}$  & there is no one else. I am  
 $\text{Elôhîm}$  & there is none like me. "46:9

more than just saying YHWH = deity. " $\text{El}$  must have  
 the special sense of being the supreme deity & of being  
 recognized as such by other peoples" 2nd Is not 1/2  
 character  $\text{El}$  → ∴ must have been some concern of (theo) (apolo)

Exilic period → ~~Gen.~~ Gen. → "God is the god of Israel"

[Question] why should  $\text{el}$  & 2nd refer some  $\text{El}$  deity & not  
 $\text{el}$  generically?

El as Patri Deity



El as Patri deity

②

Gen 46:3 "I am God the god of your father"  
'anôkî nâ'êl 'elôhê 'ābîkā) → I in El would  
eliminate the article - previous theophany to Jacob

(31:13) God also used the self design. nâ'êl  
→ (cross: Canaanite myth, 12, n. 38; 46, n. 13 -  
article developed after Iron age ∴ ① text is older  
[not article] ② article proves text is ~~is~~ a later  
date)

other theoph. uses "god of your fathers" always =  
YHWH / same nâ'êl used. ex. Is 42:5 (2nd Is)  
Thus says the God (nâ'êl) Yahweh, the one that created  
the heavens...

p.224 "This seems to confirm the sense of 'êl w/ or w/o the  
article as having the sense of the supreme being  
& identified w/ YHWH both in 2nd Is. & in the  
Yahwist" (i.e. "the one major pre-priestly editorial  
the tetrateuch").

[Ques] → is Alt/Cross trying to say that El was a Patri  
god that was later supplanted by YHWH?

'êl bêt 'êl - Gen 35:7 re: Jacob: "He built an altar  
there & called the place 'God of Bethel' for there  
God appeared to him when he fled from his brother  
(question not / according to BHS 'el missing fr Greek,  
Syriac & Vulgate)

→ wrong right thing



the earlier Theoph (Gen 28:19 / 35:15) was only Bethel  
→ only other occurrence Gen 31:13 'ēl bēṭ'ēl  
to keep "I am the god (of) Bethel (hā'ēl bēṭ'ēl)  
where you mounted a pillar..." text? ① article vs  
constructing or construct phrase "god of Bethel" ∴  
"the god, Bethel" But context, relative clause dependant  
upon it works it as place name → The Greek  
hā'ēl hanner'eh ēleykā bebēṭ'ēl → "The  
God ~~the~~ who appeared to you in Bethel" Bye bye  
ēl Bēṭ'ēl (no ref. to God - Bethel in gen<sup>al</sup>)

'ēl 'ōlām "the eternal god" (Yahwist text Gen 21:33) -  
epithet of YHWH - Cross says 'ōlām = very ancient  
in west Semitic & may be especially appropriate  
for the god El. (Cross, Canaanite Myth, 17ff). But  
by the time of the Ugaritic text term not exclusive  
to El but to any or well (šms) closest  
parallel in OT 2<sup>nd</sup> Is. (40:28) 'elōhē 'ōlām yāhweh  
"the eternal god is Yahweh" (cf. God as melk 'ōlām  
Ex 15:18; Ps 10:16; 29:10; 93:2; 102:13; 145:13; 146:10; Jer 10:10; Lam  
5:19) "Just how & when the religion of Yahweh acquired  
this & other epithets is a matter of speculation about which  
the text of Gen. can tell us nothing."



'ēl rōi<sup>ā</sup> - not true epithet "it can stand as a traditional designation of a deity independent of its narrative context." to make connection with story of place name Lahairoi (Gen. 16:13-14) doesn't mean YHWH is w/ pre existing deity of a Canaanite cult. / "SPECIAL ATTRIBUTE" Ex 34:5ff  
[Quest] → why only here?

'ēl šadday / Priestly source ∴ late date but occurs in Jacob's blessing Gen 49:25 so is it early or late -

→ poem as a whole reflects ① period after settlement & rise of monarchy earliest ② original not related to Patri narrative - emblematic ~~and~~ "typifications" - not ~~at~~ red blessing at all

but as taken in ch 48 as a whole a Priestly Blessing ~~poem~~ of Joseph's two sons & the statement of P . 49:28 Following the poem is the whole poem turned into a blessing comparable to Moses' Blessing Dt. 33

vs 25-26 don't correspond in form to other typifications ∴ added later / of Dt 33:13-16 w/ changes. added to make poem of Gen. more like a blessing as we have it in Dt 33 & thereby a better fit in the context of blessing. "

vs. 25<sup>n</sup> By the god of your father ('ēl 'ābikā) & may he help you, & by God Almighty ('ēl šadday) & may he bless you."

'ēl 'ābikā ~~unusual~~ unusual - common 'ēlōhē 'ābikā because of meter /



<sup>correspondence to P</sup>  
<sup>notion of</sup>  
<sup>God of the</sup>  
'ēl 'ābikā w/ 'ēl šadday strong <sup>to P</sup> <sup>notion of</sup> <sup>God of the</sup>  
father = 'ēl šadday (Ex 6:3) → see Dt 33:13  
w/o "Yahweh" - typical P -  
∴ w/o vs 25, 26 ~~no~~ 'ēl šadday is gen earlier  
than P source.

'ēl 'ēlyōn "God most high" - Gen 14:18-20:22 -  
Idea: El Elyon pre-Israelite deity & adopted  
into the Israelite cult at the time of David's conquest  
of the city ∴ Date of Gen 14 ?

occurs only in Ps 78:35 (in OT) stands alone in  
as 17 'ēlyōn (common in liturgical tradition) might  
be paralleled w/ 'ēl or independent (as 'ēl šadday).

late date - most semantic evd. not found from  
2nd millennium B.C. (1st mill definite inscription -  
'ēlyōn deity distinct from El - no bearing on an  
early date - if it is early).

Akkadian literary remains - common → applied  
to cosmic pantheon, the Igigi as ilāni elūti "The  
highest gods" as well as to gods individually - no reason  
to believe that the epithet was derived from the name  
of a god.

more likely part of the hypostasis of a  
divine epithet -  
'ēlyōn w/o 'ēl ≠ the existence of a distinct deity w/ this name  
- as w/ 'ēl šadday = another "name" for YHWH



ēl 'elyôn date? - late - language appropriate  
for late date - title used for Melchizedek as priest  
'ēl 'elyôn not found elsewhere but title used as high  
priesthood during Hasmoneans -

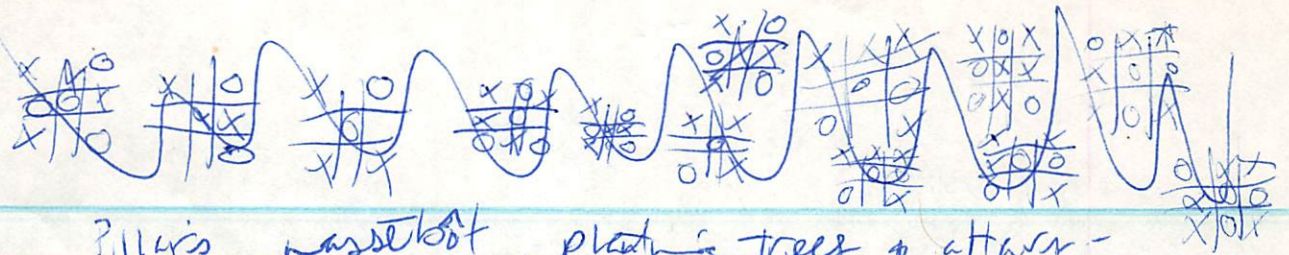
God most high ('Alāhē) 'Elāyān or 'elyōn in  
summarized Daniel -

→ Gen 1:19-22 ēl 'elyôn is qôlē šamayim  
wā'āres, "creator of heaven & earth", connection  
w/ 'l qn'rs, an epithet that was in use among the  
West Semites since 2<sup>nd</sup> mill BC. Yet nowhere outside  
of the OT is it attested in this longer form ∴ if author  
is using a well known epithet he is modifying it in a  
very significant way to express the Israelite belief  
of YHWH as creator of heaven & earth. Compound  
epithet 'ēl 'elyôn qôlē šamayim wā'āres = prob. to  
early date / ok to late date.

Summary:

- ① 'ēl epithets in Gen may be explained on basis of  
near Israelite liturgical trad.
- ② by the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. so many  
epithets were used in common by the major deities  
that one can scarcely argue for a specific history  
of amalgamation or syncretism between 2 deities on the  
basis of only 2 or 3 ~~epithets~~ epithets.
- ③ wide use of 'ēl - had become a general term for  
deity for a rather wide range of Semitic languages  
- supreme deity - not remainder of earlier  
age "but represent an increasing effort to identify  
YHWH w/ the one universal deity reflected in the use of  
the term 'ēl."





Pillar's *Wasserbott*, planting trees & altars -

- ① Deuteronomie reform and it was popular pretty  
right up to monarchy.
- ② trees in Patri land & altars - Pillars yes  
but not foreign worship -
- ③ not just patri probs - up to monarchy →

- the explanation to these references in Gen is  
reflected in the story of Jos 22 -



ch. 39

Patriarch

Joseph's reason for not doing is other  
was excuse for yielding

Signif. vs. 9 recog. on vs. God (word issue)

Potiphar - officer of Pharaoh's court <sup>high and tempter</sup>  
→ Heb = official or eunuch

he wouldn't take "no" for ~~an~~ answer.

he took care not to be w/ her  
what we do is flee from temptation & leave a  
forwarding address - ego satisfaction

took her chance - rejected / good move to indicate both

Joseph & ppl

Potiphar → has anger burned (against Joseph?)

like Abr. looking at Ishmael -

life sentence no typical sentence (adultery = death).

in jail

ch. 40

Joseph Protection not from Pharaoh  
trouble but in trouble

Dreams → Omen / vehicle for revelation

→ in prison for more than 2 yrs.  
all the delays work out great

Dream work + work toward resolution



ch 38

~~Summary~~ Judah & Tamar

Literary criticism

(interpretation of event  
fact of event) } Biblical story

Literary devices used to interpret story.  
↳ Alters eg. 8 37.

- levirate marriage -

